Research Basics

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Learning Objectives

After today’s session, you will know how to...

- Use library search engines to find relevant sources
- Evaluate sources
- Find style guides to help you cite your sources correctly
Session Outline

- Getting Started with your topic
- Constructing an effective search
- Evaluating information sources
- Finding references
- Citing your sources
- Getting More Help
Getting Started

➢ Think about your topic
  • What do you already know?
  • What additional information do you need?

➢ Identify important concepts

➢ Consider synonyms and related concepts

➢ State your topic as a research question
TOPIC: women in reality television

Research Question:
How are women portrayed in television reality shows?
Research Question to Search String

1. Use operators (AND or OR) to combine keywords

2. Enclose phrases in “ ” to ensure that the words are searched together

3. Include a wildcard symbol ( * ) to find variant endings (e.g. Canad* finds Canada, Canadian OR OR Canadians)
Structuring a Search String

AND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reality TV</th>
<th>Reality television</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

reality tv OR reality television
AND
women OR female
Finding Research Resources: Search Box on Library Home Page

- Retrieves references to books, articles and other information sources on any topic
- Good starting place for broad topics
- Often includes links to full-text
- Advanced Search option lets you limit your results by date or to specific types of resources
Search Demonstration

women AND “reality television”

Apply filters:
- Peer Review
- 2006-2017

select item #4
Finding Research Resources: the Library Catalogue

- Find books by title, author, or keyword
- Includes links to e-books and articles in pdf format
- Uses Controlled Vocabulary
Finding Research Resources: Library Research Guides

- Librarian recommended resources on every subject
- Links to databases, online encyclopaedias and more

http://guides.lib.uwo.ca
Research Guide for MIT

http://guides.lib.uwo.ca/mediainformationandtechnoculture
Course Guide for MIT1025G

http://guides.lib.uwo.ca/MIT1025
Group Activity

• **Snap** your fingers if you think the publication is **ACADEMIC**

• **Clap** your hands if you think the publication is **POPULAR**
Snap if Academic; Clap if Popular
Snap if Academic; Clap if Popular
Snap if Academic; Clap if Popular
Snap if Academic; Clap if Popular
Relevance

• Is the information relevant for your topic?
• Read the abstract and perhaps the introduction and conclusion to get a better idea of what is included.
Authority

• Who created the information?
• What are their credentials?
• Is there evidence that they have the authority to talk about the subject?
Date

- When was the article or book written?
- How important is currency for your topic?
- Is it important to include information from a classic book (i.e. Society of the Spectacle) even if it is older?
Accuracy

- Can the information be verified in other sources?
- Does the information seem credible?
- If it sounds far-fetched, it probably is?
Reason, or purpose

• Why does the information item exist?
  • To educate
  • To persuade
  • To entertain

• Think about the purpose for which the article, book or web page was created and take that into account when using it for your research
Evaluating Sources

http://guides.lib.uwo.ca/MIT1025/evaluatingsources

USE YOUR RADAR

R - Relevance
A - Authority
D - Date
A - Appearance
R - Reason
# Primary vs. Secondary Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Sources</th>
<th>Secondary Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reports of current research by the researcher (e.g. scientific article describing an experiment)</td>
<td>• Synthesis or analysis of primary sources (e.g. review articles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reports of events at the time they happened (e.g: newspaper article, literary works, interview transcripts)</td>
<td>• Critical interpretation of literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Survey textbooks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding Scholarly Articles

• Use Research Guide to find recommended search engines for your topic
• Enter your search string
• Use Refine or Modify options to narrow down your results
• Review titles and abstracts to assess relevance of references to your research question
Communication & Mass Media Complete

- Index of articles related to mass media topics
- Often includes the full-text or direct links to it
- Allows you to save your references and e-mail them and format them as need

http://guides.lib.uwo.ca/mediainformationandtechnoculture
Finding News Sources

➢ Search in full-text newspaper databases
  • Canadian NewsStand Major Dailies
  • PressDisplay
  • The Globe and Mail
  • Lexis-Nexis Academic

➢ Find references to news articles through the Main Web Site search engine
Citing Sources

• Western Libraries guides:
  http://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html

• Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
  https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

• Tools that can help
  EasyBib
  Zotero
  Mendeley
To Sum It All Up:

- Clearly define your research question
- Use the Library Catalogue to find books
- Consult Research Guides to find appropriate databases for articles
- Consider currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose when selecting resources
- Cite sources properly
- Don’t hesitate to ask for help
Getting More Help

Weldon Library Service Desk
Monday-Thursday 8-8
Friday 8-5
Saturday & Sunday 10:30-5:00

Research Help
Consultation Service
Make an appointment at https://www.lib.uwo.ca/forms/weldon/researchsupport.php

Monday-Thursday 10-10
Friday 10-5
Sat. & Sun 12-6
Thanks for Listening